Nova Scotia

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ANNUAL REPORT

for the fiscal year
ending March 31, 1989

Human Rights Commission

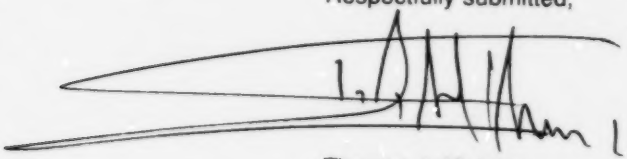
91-02875/

To His Honour
The Honourable Lloyd R. Crouse, P.C.,
Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia

May It Please Your Honour:

I have the honour to submit herewith the Report of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1989.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas J. McInnis
Minister in Charge of the
Administration of the
Human Rights Act

The Honourable Thomas J. McInnis
Minister in Charge of the Administration
of the Human Rights Act
Province of Nova Scotia

Sir:

I have the honour to present to you the Report of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1989.

Respectfully submitted,

B. Pachai

Bridglal Pachai, Ph. D.
Executive Director

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INTRODUCTION

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Human Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination against any individual or class of individuals because of race, religion, creed, color, ethnic origin, national origin, sex, or physical or mental disability in the following areas: employment; accommodation, services, and facilities; housing occupancy; sale of property; membership in employee organizations or professional, business, or trade associations; membership in volunteer organizations performing a public service. In addition, the Act prohibits discrimination in employment on the grounds of marital status or age. It also prohibits discrimination due to source of income in the area of rental housing.

The Commission promotes programs of public education and affirmative action in the field of human rights to forward the principle that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights and to eliminate all forms of discrimination.

LIST OF COMMISSIONERS

Chairperson
Dr. Donald E. Curren, C.M., Q.C., LL.D.

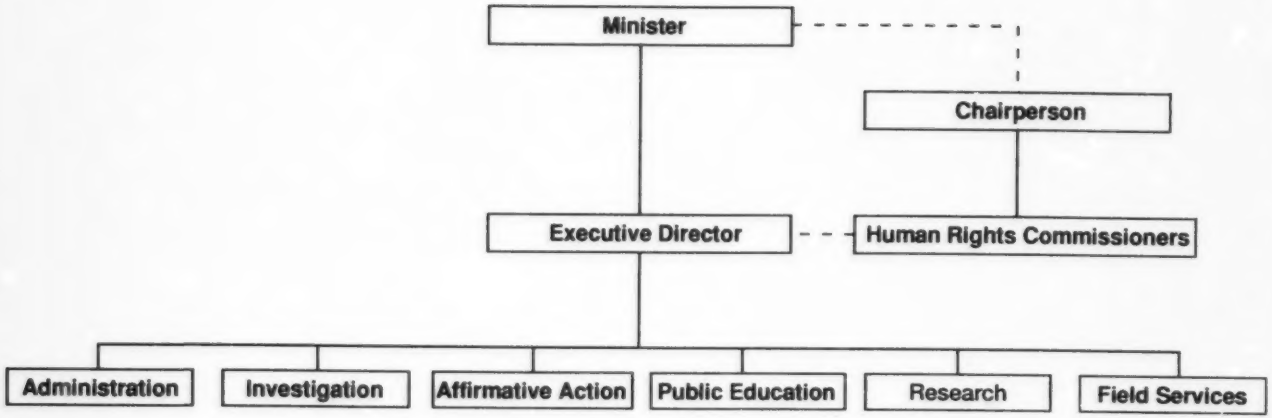
Vice-Chairperson
Dr. Fred R. MacKinnon

Members
Dr. P. Anthony Johnstone
Executive Director
Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Mr. George Davis, Q.C.
Mr. Noel Doucette
Rev. Donald Fairfax
Mr. Michael W.Y. Ha
Mrs. Michaelena Hickman
Mr. Barkat Khokhar
Mr. Peter L. McCreath
Mr. Tom Rissesco
Mr. Calvin Ruck
Dr. Shiv Sharma
Rev. Donald Skeir
Mr. Aaron D. Solomon
Mr. Ernest Surette
Ms. Margaret Swan
Ms. Betty Thomas
Rev. Donald Thomas

Organizational Chart—Human Rights Commission

April 1, 1988–March 31, 1989



ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

The Administration Division provides all support services for the Commission. These activities relate to four functional areas: Administrative Services, Staff Services, Records Management, and Finance.

The Administrative Services Section ensures that the Commission develops a coordinated approach to all initiatives and activities undertaken that have implications for the entire Commission. These relate to office facility, space management, office automation, implementation of policy and procedure, purchasing, courier services, supplies, and inventory control measures.

The Staff Services Section provides assistance to ensure effective facilities and conditions for Commission staff. Specific activities include the provision of comprehensive staff and personnel administration records.

The Records Management Section ensures that records are handled in a planned system through a centralized records entry and retrieval system. This includes the care and custody of all documents and records, circulation control, and final disposition of records.

The Financial Services Section is responsible for recording financial and accounting matters within the Commission's central office and three regional offices. For the Commission, the Section's responsibilities for accounting systems include expenditures, Order-in-Council commitments, cost sharing, and cost accounting. The section records the approval system for all capital operating expenditures and inputs payment data to the Department of Finance, which disburses the cheques to creditors.

INVESTIGATION DIVISION

FORMAL COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations and facilities, property rights, voluntary public service, and advertising on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, ethnic origin, sex, physical disability, or mental disability.

The Act prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of age (over age 40) or marital status. Employment includes membership in employee unions, professional, business, or trade associations, and volunteer agencies carrying out public functions.

The Act prohibits discrimination in housing on the basis of source of income, where the would-be renter receives income maintenance payments from any level of government or under a court order or separation agreement.

The Act prohibits discrimination against a person because he or she has made a complaint or given evidence or assisted in any way in respect to a complaint.

The Act applies to any person — whether employer, employment agency, employer or employee organization, professional, business, or trade association, volunteer agency performing public functions, or property owner.

Any person who alleges discrimination must make the complaint on a prescribed form, available at any office of the Human Rights Commission. The complaint form is a simple statement of basic facts of the alleged acts of discrimination. The Commission may also initiate an investigation where it has reasonable grounds for believing that a complaint exists.

The complaint is assigned to an officer for investigation. Human rights officers are professionals trained to conduct investigations in a fair, impartial, and objective manner. The conduct of investigations is consistent with the principles of natural justice.

At the conclusion of the investigation, and where there is evidence to support the complaint, officers of the Commission attempt to conciliate

the complaint and arrive at an amicable settlement acceptable to all parties. Experience has shown that it is possible to resolve the majority of complaints.

Should settlement fail, the Commission reports to the Minister in Charge of the Administration of the Human Rights Act, who may appoint a board of inquiry. The board conducts a public hearing, and all parties have the opportunity to present evidence and make representations. The board may add, as parties, such persons as it considers necessary, but only after these persons have an opportunity to oppose the board's intention to add them as parties.

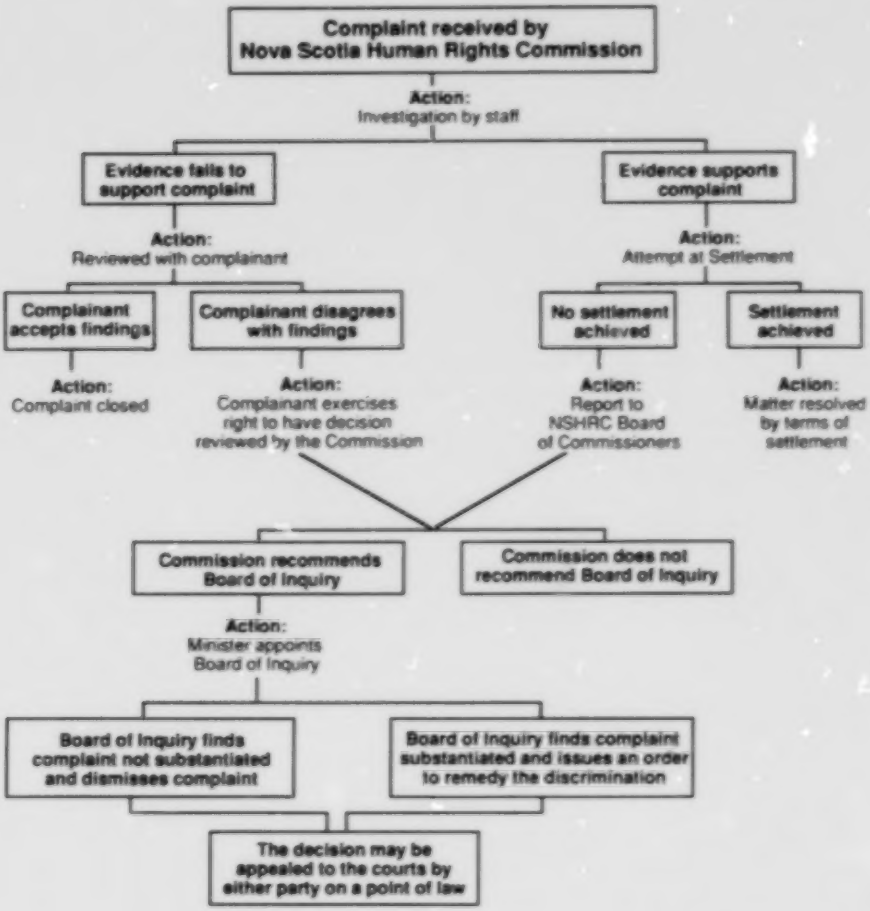
The Commission receives numerous intake calls on a daily basis. These inquiries are a combination of information, assistance, and referrals. Where matters discussed do not fall under the formal coverage of the Act, the Commission limits its participation to that of a helping role.

Informal Complaints—Intakes

Regions	1988–1989
Central	1,797
Digby	308
Sydney	327
New Glasgow	272
Total	2,704

Formal Complaints by Ground

Ground	1988-89
Race/Color	46
Ethnic Origin/National Origin	20
Creed/Religion	6
Sex	40
Age	7
Marital Status	4
Disability	32
Source of Income	1
Association	2
Total	158


Complaint received by Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission
Action: Investigation by staff
Evidence fails to support complaint
Evidence supports complaint
Action: Reviewed with complainant
Action: Attempt at Settlement
Complainant accepts findings
Complainant disagrees with findings
No settlement achieved
Settlement achieved
Action: Complaint closed
Action: Complainant exercises right to have decision reviewed by the Commission
Action: Report to NSHRC Board of Commissioners
Action: Matter resolved by terms of settlement
Commission recommends Board of Inquiry
Commission does not recommend Board of Inquiry
Action: Minister appoints Board of Inquiry
Board of Inquiry finds complaint not substantiated and dismisses complaint
Board of Inquiry finds complaint substantiated and issues an order to remedy the discrimination
The decision may be appealed to the courts by either party on a point of law

Results of Complaints

Results	1988-89
Resolved	42
Withdrawn	61
Dismissed	12
Board of Inquiry	2
Continuing	41
Total	158

Areas of Complaints

Area	1988-89
Employment	111
Housing	37
Services	8
Advertising	2
Total	158

SAMPLE CASES

Employment — Race and/or Color and Sex

A black woman was employed by a company for three years. She began experiencing problems when a new supervisor was hired.

The woman claimed that the supervisor treated her unfairly as compared to her white coworkers. She also claimed that the supervisor sexually harassed her and the other female workers and that this increased when she became pregnant. The woman found it necessary to take a leave of absence due to job-related stress.

The woman filed a complaint alleging discrimination based on race and/or color and/or sex. An investigation was carried out by the Human Rights Commission. Coworkers supported the woman's allegations. The supervisor against whom the allegations were made was transferred to another location during the course of the investigation.

As a result of the conciliation attempts made by the Human Rights Commission, the company agreed to the following terms of settlement:

1. The woman received $1,000 in general damages.

2. The complaint was noted on the supervisor's personal file, and he was warned that if, in the future, he engaged in such conduct, he would receive discipline, including possible dismissal.

The woman returned to work upon completion of her maternity leave.

Employment — Disability

A young woman was employed as a short-order cook. She had been taking medication to treat an acne condition but discontinued this while she was pregnant. Upon return to work after her maternity leave, her employer noticed the woman's acne.

The woman was initially told she was laid off until her blemishes cleared up and then later offered a position in the stockroom. She decided to quit rather than accept the transfer.

The Human Rights Commission accepted this complaint as discrimination based on disability. After investigation, the employer reimbursed the woman for the wages she had lost, and she returned to her job as a short-order cook.

Employment — Age and/or Sex Discrimination

A female was employed by a clothing store for 19 years, 15 of these years as manager. New owners subsequently took over the business and made some changes. The woman continued to work, two weeks after which the owners told her they were bringing in a man from a nearby town to be manager. They claimed to have trained him, but the woman knew the recruit and told them that this individual had worked under her as a clerk. Management claimed that the recruit had two years' experience, which the complainant disclaimed. The only option given the woman was to continue to work, but as a cashier. Also, while working overtime to help with the inventory, the woman broke her glasses, and the group insurance company refused to pay for their replacement.

After the first week under the new management, the woman suffered a loss in salary and the position of manager was given to the male. Salary was never negotiated with the complainant who eventually quit her employment and went on unemployment insurance benefits.

The woman brought her complaint to the Human Rights Commission claiming she was discriminated against when the new owners selected a young male manager with little experience over her 15 years' experience.

After investigation, the company admitted to being "a little at fault" and conciliation attempts were successful. Owners agreed to the following terms of settlement: (1) payment for complainant's glasses, and (2) a cheque for two weeks' pay to be credited to an RRSP savings account rather than interfere with her UI benefits.

Employment — National Origin

A man of East Indian origin applied for a teaching position with a school board. When the position was given to another teacher, whom he felt was less qualified, he filed a complaint with the Commission.

The respondent denied they discriminated against the complainant. They maintained that the person who was chosen was the best qualified and mentioned that there were difficulties with the complainant's ability to manage and communicate in the classroom.

The investigation carried out by the Human Rights Commission revealed there was no regulated system to score the applicants and that not all members of the selection committee attended the interviews. Selection for the teaching positions were done by informal discussions as to which person best stood out in the interviews.

Further investigation revealed the complainant was an excellent teacher in the subject matter. The successful teacher did not have the qualifications to teach the subject, and this was indicated to the interview committee.

The complaint was settled when the school board apologized to the complainant and agreed to offer him a teaching position at one of the local high schools. Financial compensation was also provided to the complainant.

Employment — Disability

The complainant left his job in another province to return home to Nova Scotia to take up a position with a major corporation as an industrial electrician. On his second day of employment it was noticed that he had

a tremor in his left hand. He was notified that his employment was terminated as he was a safety risk to himself and others at the plant. He lodged a complaint with the Human Rights Commission.

His claims that this tremor in no way affected his work performance were ignored by the personnel department. His subsequent appeals to be allowed to work for a probationary period proved fruitless. Three weeks later, the complainant received a similar position with another major corporation.

Following an investigation, a settlement was reached. The respondent, without any admission of liability, agreed to pay the sum of $4000 to the complainant.

Employment — Disability

Brian Truelove vs Bowater Mersey Paper Company Ltd.
Decision of Professor John Yogis, Q.C., rendered on February 8, 1989

Mr. Brian Truelove was a casual employee at Bowater Mersey Paper Company Ltd. from November 1986 to January 1987. He was diagnosed as having high blood pressure. He received a letter from the company stating that they could not offer him further work because of a "pre-existing medical condition" that prevented him from fulfilling all the normal requirements demanded of casual spares. Mr. Truelove filed a complaint with the Commission on February 12, 1987, based on physical disability.

The matter was advanced to a Board of Inquiry. The Board of Inquiry, in its decision, accepted the settlement reached by agreement among the parties. The terms of settlement, including financial compensation, were not disclosed.

Employment — Race and/or Color

Dwight Johnson vs Royal Canadian Legion, Branch #9, Windsor
Decision of Judge W. Atton, Q.C., rendered on July 27, 1988

Mr. Dwight Johnson was regularly employed at Windsor Cleaning Services Limited for about five years. On February 20, 1984, he was approached by Mr. Lester Benedict to clean the Royal Canadian Legion full time. Mr. Johnson accepted the job offer.

During his full-time employment at the Legion, Mr. Johnson claimed he was subjected to racial slurs, jokes, and stereotypes by some of the Legion members. On February 1, 1986, Mr. Johnson was told that the Legion was terminating his job. The matter proceeded to a Board of Inquiry.

The Board of Inquiry in its decision accepted the settlement reached by agreement among the parties.

The terms of settlement, which included financial compensation to Mr. D. Johnson, were not disclosed.

Employment — Race and/or Color and/or Sex

Regina Bishop vs Canadian Frozen Foods Provisioners Limited and/or Ryan Lockhart
Decision of Victor Goldberg, rendered on December 6, 1988

Regina Bishop, a black Nova Scotian, alleged that she was subjected to abuse of both a racial and a sexual nature during her employment, in violation of Sections 8(1) and 11A(1)(d) of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act.

The Board of Inquiry, in its decision, accepted the settlement reached by agreement among the parties prior to the hearing.

The terms of settlement included the following:

1. Canadian Frozen Foods Provisioners Limited was to post a copy of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission scroll in a place that is conspicuous to members of the public and employees of Canadian Frozen Foods Provisioners Limited.

2. No later than June 1, 1988, the company was to coordinate an education program for its employees on the rights of individuals, through the offices of the Human Rights Commission.

3. Other terms agreed to by all parties, which remained undisclosed were to be complied with no later than 4 p.m., December 6, 1988.

PUBLIC EDUCATION DIVISION

The Public Education Division is responsible for the development and implementation of public information and education programs in the area of human rights. It is one of the most important areas in which the Commission operates. Its main objectives are to promote awareness of human rights; to eliminate ignorance and prejudice; to effect positive attitudinal changes with regard to human rights issues; and to create a climate of respect for the dignity and rights of all people irrespective of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, age, and source of income.

The Public Information and Education programs include school conferences, workshops, seminars, public speaking, ceremonies commemorating special days, dissemination of materials on human rights and related topics, displays, press releases, advertisements, television programs, liaison with community, ethnic, and minority groups, as well as organizations serving disabled persons and women's organizations, cooperation with government departments, assisting students, teachers, researchers, and the general public in research on human rights and related topics, and answering general telephone and written inquiries.

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission recognizes the significant role of educators in formulating attitudes. Thus, it promotes teacher education in the area of human rights. The Public Education Officer served as one of the members of the project advisory committee of the Public Legal Education Society of Nova Scotia responsible for the publication of *Teaching Human Rights: A Casebook for Senior High Teachers*.

On January 20, 1988 the Public Education Officer participated in an introductory inservice for teachers to field-test materials developed by the Canadian Human Rights Foundation for human rights education for students in grades four to six.

The Joint Human Rights and Education Committee is co-chaired by the Deputy Minister of Education and the Executive Director of the Human Rights Commission. It recommends and/or examines materials relating to minorities, women, and disabled persons, as brought forward by members of the committee drawn from the Commission, Department of Education, and various ethnocultural and advocacy groups.

THE LIBRARY

The Commission library serves clients of all age groups who conduct research on human rights and related areas. The library collection includes publications on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, racism, multiculturalism, ethnic studies, women, disabled persons and relevant government documents. It is a reference library only. The public is encouraged to use the library and to seek assistance if required during library hours, which are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.

COMMISSION LITERATURE

Nova Scotia Human Rights Act
How the Human Rights Commission Serves People
Human Rights: A Guide for Employers
Human Rights: Policy Guidelines on Sexual Harassment
Guidelines for Investigating Complaints
Human Rights: Physical or Mental Disability
Human Rights: Source of Income
The Acadians of Nova Scotia
Les Acadiens de la Nouvelle-Écosse
Pictorial on Black History, Nova Scotia
Getting Your Foot in the Door
Poster: *People in the Same Boat Help One Another*
Affirmative Action

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

School Conferences

School conferences are an effective means of involving teachers and students in activities that increase their understanding of human rights. There were three school conferences in 1988-89.

The conferences vary from one day to one week in duration, depending on the needs of the students and on the size of the student body. Before each conference there is an orientation session for the teaching staff to make them aware of the goals of the conference as well as the programs. Teachers are requested to stimulate students' interests in human rights before the conference by engaging them in pre-conference activities. These activities include students' poster, essay, or public-speaking contests and answering the pre-conference questionnaire on human rights. Some students, with the assistance of their teachers, rehearse plays, skits, and/or human rights songs to be presented at the

opening session of the conference. If the conference is held in a high school, student representatives are involved in the planning of the conference.

If the conference is held in a school in the metro area, part of the student orientation involves a trip by selected students to the Commission office, where they are introduced to the officers who discuss human rights with them. Some of these students will be speakers on various human rights topics at the opening session. They are encouraged to use the reference materials in the Commission library and to seek assistance from the Public Education Officer.

The actual conference usually includes an opening session, a closing session, and classroom sessions. The Minister in Charge of the Administration of the Human Rights Act, or his designate, often delivers the keynote address at the opening session. The classroom sessions are conducted by human rights officers with the assistance of resource persons from various community groups and organizations, e.g., Status of Women, Micmac Native Learning Centre, etc. Recommendations and suggestions at these sessions are recorded and presented at the closing session if there is one. There are usually no closing sessions at elementary school conferences, but students fill out the post-conference questionnaire with comments, suggestions, and views of the conference.

Materials provided to the schools include a conference agenda, pre-conference and post-conference questionnaires, and relevant human rights pamphlets.

In 1988-89, conferences were held at the following schools:

October-November 1988	Holy Angels High School, Sydney
December 1988	St. Mary's School, Halifax
March 1989	Memorial Junior High School, Sydney

Observance of the 40th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights — December 10, 1948

Luncheon to Honor Dr. John Peters Humphrey, O.C., O.Q.

The observance of the 40th Anniversary year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights began on April 18, 1988, with a luncheon hosted by the Government of Nova Scotia to honor Dr. John Peters Humphrey, O.C., O.Q., first director of the U.N. Secretariat's Division of Human

Rights (1946-66), for his life-long contribution to human rights, nationally and internationally. The Premier presented Dr. Humphrey with a Certificate of Recognition. At the request of the Human Rights Commission, Halifax Cablevision telecast the ceremony, including Dr. Humphrey's speech on peace.

Human Rights Displays

In addition to other promotional material, some photos of people responsible for the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," taken circa 1948, together with copies of the first pages of Dr. Humphrey's typed drafts of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, were sent by the Public Education Division to the regional libraries and university libraries of Nova Scotia, requesting them to set up human rights displays. Some libraries responded, and some of these had a half-day or one-day human rights program with guest speakers in conjunction with their displays.

Telecasts

Human rights films were telecast through ASN Educational Channel every day from August 15 to August 19, 1988. Later, more human rights films were telecast through Halifax Cablevision (Channel 10) every Friday from October 21, 1988, to January 27, 1989. Most of the films were borrowed from National Film Board of Canada.

A half-hour interview with the Commission's Executive Director by Mr. Gary Dockendorff on human rights issues was telecast through all the cablevision stations across Nova Scotia on or around Human Rights Day, December 10.

The Halifax Cablevision repeated the telecast of the entire Human Rights Day Ceremony a few times in December 1988 and January 1989.

Cape Breton Cablevision and Halifax Cablevision telecast performances (choral singing, etc.) with human rights themes by the students of Holy Angels High School.

International Human Rights Day

International Human Rights Day was observed with a ceremony at Province House. The Minister in Charge of the Administration of the Human Rights Act spoke about the Proclamation on the Occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which

Nova Scotia

DECLARATION

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has declared May 29 – June 4, 1988 as National Access Awareness Week, and

WHEREAS the Government of Nova Scotia had made a proclamation in support of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992), and the United Nations World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, and

WHEREAS the Government of Nova Scotia has long given recognition to disabled persons for their achievements and contributions to our society, and

WHEREAS the Nova Scotia Interdepartmental Committee on Government Programmes for Disabled Persons has engaged in consultation and assessment of programmes to carry out the objectives of the Proclamation, and

WHEREAS it is imperative for all Nova Scotians to recognize the abilities, dignity, and contributions of disabled persons; and to assist the Government in the elimination of discriminatory attitudes and actions against all disabled persons;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John M. Buchanan, P.C., Q.C., Premier of the Province of Nova Scotia, do hereby declare the week of May 29 – June 4 to be "Access Awareness Week", and urge all citizens, to reaffirm the necessity to eliminate all physical, psychological and systemic barriers and obstacles, which impede disabled persons in their daily lives, thus ensuring their fullest possible participation in all activities of our society.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Province of Nova Scotia to be affixed at Halifax on this 30th day of May, 1988.

Hon. John M. Buchanan, P.C., Q.C.
Premier of Nova Scotia

was signed by provincial ministers and the federal minister responsible for human rights on behalf of their respective governments at the ministerial conference held in September 1988, as well as of other human rights issues discussed at that conference.

The Premier then presented awards to the following for their contribution to the promotion of human rights and/or participation in human rights activities: Halifax Cablevision Limited, National Film Board of Canada, Metro Telecaster, television host Mr. Gary Dockendorff, the libraries that set up supportive human rights displays, and students of Holy Angels High School and St. Mary's School.

The ceremony concluded with a Citizenship Court. All new Canadians were presented with a human rights kit.

In response to a request from the Human Rights Directorate of the Secretary of State of Canada, the Public Education Division sent copies of the *Proclamation on the Occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* to all public and private schools throughout Nova Scotia.

National Access Awareness Week — May 29 - June 4, 1988

The Human Rights Commission and Halifax Cablevision jointly produced a series of interviews with the Commission Chairperson and representatives of some organizations serving disabled persons. The program was telecast every day during National Access Awareness Week (May 29-June 4, 1988) through ASN Educational Channel. The persons interviewed were Dr. Donald E. Curren, N.S. Human Rights Commission; Mr. Keith Dillman, Canadian National Institute for the Blind; Mr. Laurie Cranton, Canadian Paraplegic Association; Ms. Katherine Gagne, Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians; Ms. Patricia Brown, Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities; Mr. Barry Abbott, Atlantic Centre of Support for Disabled Students; Ms. Wendy Holland, Ferguson Library for Print Handicapped Students, Saint Mary's University; Ms. Veronica MacNeil, Recreation Council on Disability in Nova Scotia; and Mr. Doug Crossman, Canadian Mental Health Association.

The host of the program, Mr. Gary Dockendorff, interviewed the guests about the activities and programs of their respective organizations, the needs of disabled persons, barriers they encounter, and legislation protecting them. The same series was telecast later through Halifax Cablevision from July 6 to August 12 (on Wednesdays and Fridays).

PROCLAMATION

THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION MARCH 21

WHEREAS the Government of Nova Scotia has a longstanding commitment to the development of a society in which all persons regardless of race, colour, national and ethnic origin, religion or creed, sex, age or disability could work and live in peace, harmony and mutual respect;

WHEREAS all residents of Nova Scotia have the right to equal treatment, opportunity, respect and understanding;

WHEREAS the elimination of racism and racial discrimination is essential in the promotion of equality for all Nova Scotians;

WHEREAS the General Assembly of the United Nations has designated March 21st as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination;

WHEREAS the Government of Nova Scotia had made a proclamation recognizing the United Nations' Second Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, John M. Buchanan, PC., Q.C., Premier of Nova Scotia, do hereby proclaim March 21st as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; and urge all Nova Scotians to make it their moral and social responsibility to eliminate all forms of racism and racial discrimination in their dealings with one another;

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Province of Nova Scotia to be affixed at Halifax on this Twenty-First day of March ,1989.

Hon. John M. Buchanan, PC, Q.C.
Premier of Nova Scotia

On May 30, 1988, the Premier of Nova Scotia presided at a Declaration Ceremony at Province House. The Premier signed a declaration recognizing May 29 - June 4, 1988 as National Access Awareness Week. He urged Nova Scotians to recognize the rights of disabled persons and to promote the full participation of disabled persons in our economic and social life. He then presented Certificates of Recognition to the following for their contribution and services to the disabled community:

- Canadian Paraplegic Association
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind
- Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians
- Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Canadian Association for Community Living
- The Atlantic Centre of Support for Disabled Students
- Recreation Council on Disability in Nova Scotia
- Ferguson Library for Print Handicapped Students
- Mr. Andrew Lynch, Lydon Lynch Associates Ltd.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

During a ceremony to recognize the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination at Province House, the Premier read the proclamation proclaiming March 21 as "the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination," which he had signed. He urged Nova Scotians to "make it their moral and social responsibility to eliminate all forms of racism and racial discrimination in their dealings with one another."

The Minister in Charge of the Administration of the Human Rights Act briefly spoke about the International Day and the Government of Nova Scotia's programs to eliminate racial discrimination. He then encouraged the audience to make suggestions for further measures to combat racism.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION DIVISION

BACKGROUND:

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission continues to carry out affirmative action activities in the areas of education, housing, and employment. The first affirmative action agreement in the area of employment was signed between the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission and Maritime Tel and Tel in 1972. Since that time, many similar agreements have been made.

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission has no mandatory legislation for affirmative action programs. All programs are carried out on a voluntary basis. Permission for such programs is under Section 19 of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act.

The main aim of affirmative action activities is to take positive action in an attempt to overcome the tendency to exclude visible minorities, disabled persons, and women from the mainstream of society and to increase their representation in the workforce.

To date, some positive gains have been made in the area of affirmative action; however, much remains to be done. The Commission continues to call on the private and public sectors to do this.

WHY WE NEED AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Despite the fact that some gains have been made, visible minorities, women, and disabled persons still do not have equitable representation in the workplace. One way to combat this problem is to have policies designed and implemented that will ensure that action is taken to correct the imbalance. Negative stereotypes must be removed and a greater positive awareness created. Much of this can be done through education and awareness sessions.

Affirmative action can help wipe out discernible patterns of discrimination that presently exist. Where it does exist, discrimination may be subtle and appear as the result of many things — apathy, tradition, lack of awareness. Whatever the reason, the problem exists and can result in rejection and exclusion. Affirmative action committees exist throughout the province of Nova Scotia to help address these problems.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION COMMITTEES

For the purpose of this annual report emphasis will be given to affirmative action committees.

Historical Perspective

Affirmative Action Committees have been active in the province of Nova Scotia since 1970. The first committee was formed in Antigonish. Since that time, several other committees have been formed. Committees presently exist in the communities of:

- Antigonish
- Glace Bay
- Sydney
- Truro and District
- Yarmouth

In post-secondary education institutions:

- St. Francis Xavier University
- Acadia University

And in employment organizations, such as

- Maritime Tel & Tel
- Scott Maritimes
- City of Dartmouth

What Are Affirmative Action Committees?

Affirmative Action Committees are community- and employer-based organizations that promote human rights in general and affirmative action in particular. At present the majority of the community-based committees are mainly located in some of the communities where human rights offices do not exist. Some committees receive a small grant from the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission to assist them in administrative costs. Others are supported by their employer organization, e.g., town, city, corporation, educational institution.

Affirmative Action Committee guidelines have been developed by and are available upon request from the Affirmative Action Division of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission.

Affirmative Action Activities

Highlights of the activities of the Affirmative Action Committees over the past year include the following:

- Held special events to mark the occasion of such days as; Martin Luther King Day; International Women's Day; Black History Month; Access Awareness Day.
- Purchased a special technical device for a quadriplegic.
- Participated in special seminars to heighten awareness of affirmative action.
- Honored a past president for many years of devoted services to human rights and affirmative action (Truro).
- Arranged special events where Affirmative Action Division employees address the public concerning their affirmative action programs.
- Supported special programs for some women's transition houses.
- Supported many outreach employment programs.
- Sponsored summer research and employment programs that employed students while also collecting and compiling community economic research information.
- Supported the disabled community's request for an attendant's care program.
- Supported the disabled community's request for accessibility into the Antigonish Tourist Bureau.
- Persuaded the mayor and council of Sydney to declare February as Black History Month in keeping with the request for cooperation from the Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia.
- Encouraged police departments to increase their visible minority representation.
- Promoted World Awareness Week.

- Encouraged cable television networks to show human rights films, especially during the month of December (December 10, International Human Rights Day).

- Produced and circulated community services directories (Sydney).

- Held awareness sessions for staff (Affirmative Action Committees).

- Provided opportunities for resource representation from various programs and groups to address committees.

- Encouraged the hiring of more target group representation within work forces.

- Encouraged more employers to practise affirmative action and thus to ensure employment equity.

Conclusion

Affirmative action committees assist student projects when feasible, and cooperate with other groups, committees, and organizations in the public and private sector.

Affirmative Action committees demonstrate through their actions and help spread the word that affirmative action can make a difference.

RESEARCH DIVISION

The Research Division of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission has continued to promote awareness of the diverse ethnic groups in Nova Scotia and has become more fully involved in promoting understanding of human rights issues and concerns by frequently assisting educators, high school, university, and other post-secondary students as well as members of the general public in their research assignments and projects dealing with human rights and closely related matters.

Meetings have been ongoing with other organizations, individuals, groups, and provincial and federal government departments involved in issues relating to human rights. The Commission continues to assist wherever possible in the human rights field.

This liaison has taken place with groups committed to improving human rights in the areas of education, employment, housing and accommodations, and services provided to the general public. It has sometimes taken the form of presenting lectures to groups or organizations, attending and participating in the deliberations of the groups and organizations on a monthly basis, as well as attending receptions, workshops, and conferences.

Following is a breakdown of the activities and engagements in which this section of the Human Rights Commission has been involved:

Engagements/Activities: 1988-89

Speaking engagements	1
Lectures/conferences/workshops	6
Annual general meetings	1
Student human rights conferences	1
Liaison Meetings	17
Cultural events/receptions	2

The Research Officer was on educational leave between April 1, 1988 and August 31, 1988.

FIELD SERVICES

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission has three regional offices. The office located in Digby serves the counties of Lunenburg, Queens, Shelburne, Yarmouth, Digby, Annapolis, and Kings. The New Glasgow office serves the counties of Colchester, Cumberland, Pictou, Guysborough, and Antigonish, although formal complaints are investigated by staff of the central office. The Sydney office serves all of Cape Breton.

The Digby office was very active in the areas of community liaison and public speaking. The many activities included:

- In cooperation with Oxfam Canada, black women from six communities served by the Digby office met with a member of the Federation of Transvaal Women to speak on South Africa's system of apartheid.

- The keynote address was given at a Youth Human Rights Conference sponsored by the Cultural Awareness Youth Group of Nova Scotia on the subject "The Universality of Human Rights."

- A meeting was held with parents and teens of Southville, Digby County, to determine their concerns about school suspensions, detentions, attendance, discipline policy, racial incident policy, streaming of students, etc.; and to determine their educational goals.

The Cape Breton region is very large and therefore requires some innovative thinking to disseminate information on the Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Act. In order to do this, as well as meeting concerned citizens, the Cape Breton office embarked on a program of going out to the counties. This was achieved by advertising in the local media that an officer of the Commission would be in the municipal office of that county on a specific date. The general public could then come to that office to obtain literature on its activities and discuss their concerns with the officer. This program proved highly successful and is continuing.

The New Glasgow office did not have a regional supervisor for the period under review. The office was staffed by a secretary whose administrative duties were necessarily extended while other functions were carried out in the region by central office personnel.